

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC 9447

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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CAIRO FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR IS US

SUBJ: RABIN ON U.S. -ISRAELI RELATIONS

SUMMARY. RABIN IN DECEMBER 18 ADDRESS SAID THAT FOUNDATION OF U.S. /ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP IS U.S. INTEREST IN MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST WHICH DEPENDS ON A STRONG ISRAEL. HE WARNED THAT TWO DEVELOPMENTS COULD LEAD TO RIFT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND U.S.: (A) WERE ISRAELI POLICIES TO PROVOKE SUPERPOWER MILITARY CONFRONTATION,

AND (B) WERE ISRAELI POLICIES TO LEAVE U.S. ISOLATED IN MIDDLE EAST ONLY ON SIDE OF ISRAEL. HE ALSO URGED ISRAELIS IN INTEREST OF MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO U.S. FINANCIAL/MILITARY ASSISTANCE BEYOND WHICH ISRAEL WILL BECOME "MILLSTONE AROUND U.S. NECK". FINALLY, RABIN
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ADVISED ISRAELIS AGAINST ASSUMPTION THAT U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

WAS AUTOMATICALLY ASSURED ON ALL ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS FROM ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PRIME MINISTER RABIN TO U.S.-ISRAEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON DEC 18 IN TEL AVIV (AT WHICH THE AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT) ON THE SUBJECT OF "U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS."

2. THE FOUNDATION OF U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS. RABIN STATED THAT THE RECENT ARTICLE BY JOSEPH ALSOP PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES MADE THE ERRONEOUS CENTRAL ASSUMPTION THAT U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IS BASED ON THE "NEGATIVE PRINCIPLE" OF HOW THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD FEEL WERE ISRAEL TO BE DESTROYED. INSTEAD, THAT RELATIONSHIP HAS TWO POSITIVE FOUNDATIONS: (A) "A COMPONENT OF MOOD, APPROACH AND ATTITUDE" OF ONE PEOPLE TO ANOTHER, AND (B) A COMPONENT OF INTERESTS--WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION THINKS IS GOOD FOR THE U.S. AND ITS PEOPLE. AMERICAN SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR ISRAEL RUNS VERY DEEP. BUT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THIS IS NOT THE CENTRAL ISSUE. U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IS BASED ON THE "POSITIVE ASSUMPTION" THAT THE U.S.S. INTEREST IS IN THE EXISTENCE OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND, IN ITS ABSENCE, AT LEAST A RELAXATION OF TENSIONS. WITHOUT A STRONG ISRAEL THERE WILL BE NO LULL IN THE MIDDLE EAST, CERTAINLY NOT FOR THE UNITED STATES. PRESIDENT NIXON, WHO GAVE ISRAEL MAXIMUM U.S. AID, WAS THE ONLY U.S. PRESIDENT ALLOWED TO VISIT ARAB COUNTRIES AND TO BE CHEERED IN CAIRO.

3. CONDITIONS ON WHICH U.S. WOULD NOT SUPPORT ISRAEL. U.S. WILL NOT SUPPORT ISRAEL IF THE RELATIONSHIP WOULD LEAD TO TWO EXTREME DEVELOPMENTS: (A) AN OUTRIGHT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS, WHICH COULD ESCALATE TO A THIRD WORLD WAR, AND (B) IF ITS TIES TO ISRAEL WERE TO LEAD TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ALL THE U.S. WOULD HAVE LEFT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD BE ITS FRIENDSHIP WITH ISRAEL. IF BETWEEN THESE TWO EXTREMES ISRAEL PROVES ITSELF CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING AN "APPROPRIATE POLICY", IT WILL BE SURE TO HAVE U.S. SUPPORT BASED ON U.S. SYMPATHY AND INTERESTS.

4. LIMITATIONS ON U.S. AID FOR ISRAEL. IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUING U.S. FRIENDSHIP AND INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING ISRAEL, "WE MUST KNOW THAT THERE ARE LIMITS IN BURDENING THE U.S. WITH OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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REQUIREMENTS...IF WE DO NOT SUCCEED IN MINIMIZING THE SCALE OF THE AMERICAN FINANCIAL AID TO ISRAEL BY A MAXIMUM UTILIZATION OF WHAT WE CAN DO, WE WILL DO INJURY BOTH TO OUR FRIENDSHIP AND INTERESTS. THE UNITED STATES CAN BE A SUCCOR FOR A LONG TIME, IF WE DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING THAT WE CAN AFFORD TO EXAGGERATE IN DEMANDS UPON FRIENDS".

5. U.S. TECHNICIANS IN SINAI. RABIN SAID THAT HE COULD HAVE DONE

A BETTER JOB OF EXPLAINING THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN SINAI AS PART OF SINAI II. "THIS IS SELF-CRITICISM AND I TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY". THE IDEA OF U.S. PRESENCE IN SINAI WAS CONCEIVED BY EGYPT, NOT ISRAEL, BUT IT WAS UNDERSTOOD IN THE U.S. AS AN ISRAELI CONDITION FOR ADHERING TO THE INTERIM AGREEMENT.

6. PRESERVING THE U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP. RABIN SAID THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY COMPLAINTS BY ISRAELIS AGAINST THE U.S. BEFORE ASKING THEMSELVES WHETHER ISRAEL HAS DONE EVERYTHING IT CAN DO

.
MOREOVER, THE ASSUMPTION THAT "AMERICA IS IN THE BAG" AS IT OFTEN SEEMS WHEN LISTENING TO SPEAKERS BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE THE KNESSET IS "AM EXPRESSION DAMAGING TO THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S." ISRAEL MUST RESPECT WHAT IT RECEIVES, MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE DESPITE THE DIFFERENCE IN DIMENSIONS, AND AVOID ACTIONS ON ITS PART WHICH MIGHT DESTROY THE STRUCTURE OF U.S./ISRAELI FRIENDSHIP. HE COUNSELLED AGAINST "EMOTIONAL COMPLAINTS," AND CHANGING THAT RELATIONSHIP TO ONE OF "PERSONAL CONFRONTATIONS" AND "ONE-SIDED CLAIMS". BY SEEKING THE CORRECT MIX OF INDEPENDENCE ON ONE HAND AND A SEARCH FOR COMMON INTERESTS ON THE OTHER, WITHOUT BECOMING TOO MUCH OF A BURDEN AND COMPLAINING TOO MUCH, THE ASSET OF U.S./ISRAELI FRIENDSHIP CAN BE MAINTAINED FOR MANY YEARS TO COME.
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